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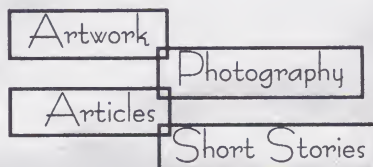


backseat.3

Interviews • One King Down • Union Articles • Human Overpopulation • Women's Political Power • A New Look at Christianity • Attitudes towards Bi's • Reviews • Zines • Music

s u b m i t

Backseat is continually looking for submissions. All you have to do is mail me your stuff (check out back page for more info). How hard is that? I am looking for these things:



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Thanks: The one year anniversary of Bs has come and gone with little notice, but there have been two people who have been there throughout. One is Manny, who, when I told him I wanted to do a zine, was not only behind me, but inspired me to put my words into action. The second is Eric, who, through my many demands, always tolerates me and stands beside me. I could have done it without them, but I am grateful they were there to help me along. One year and counting...

Reviews: Send all zines and music (pref. on CD) to the address below marked with either, "attn: zine reviews," or, "attn: music reviews."

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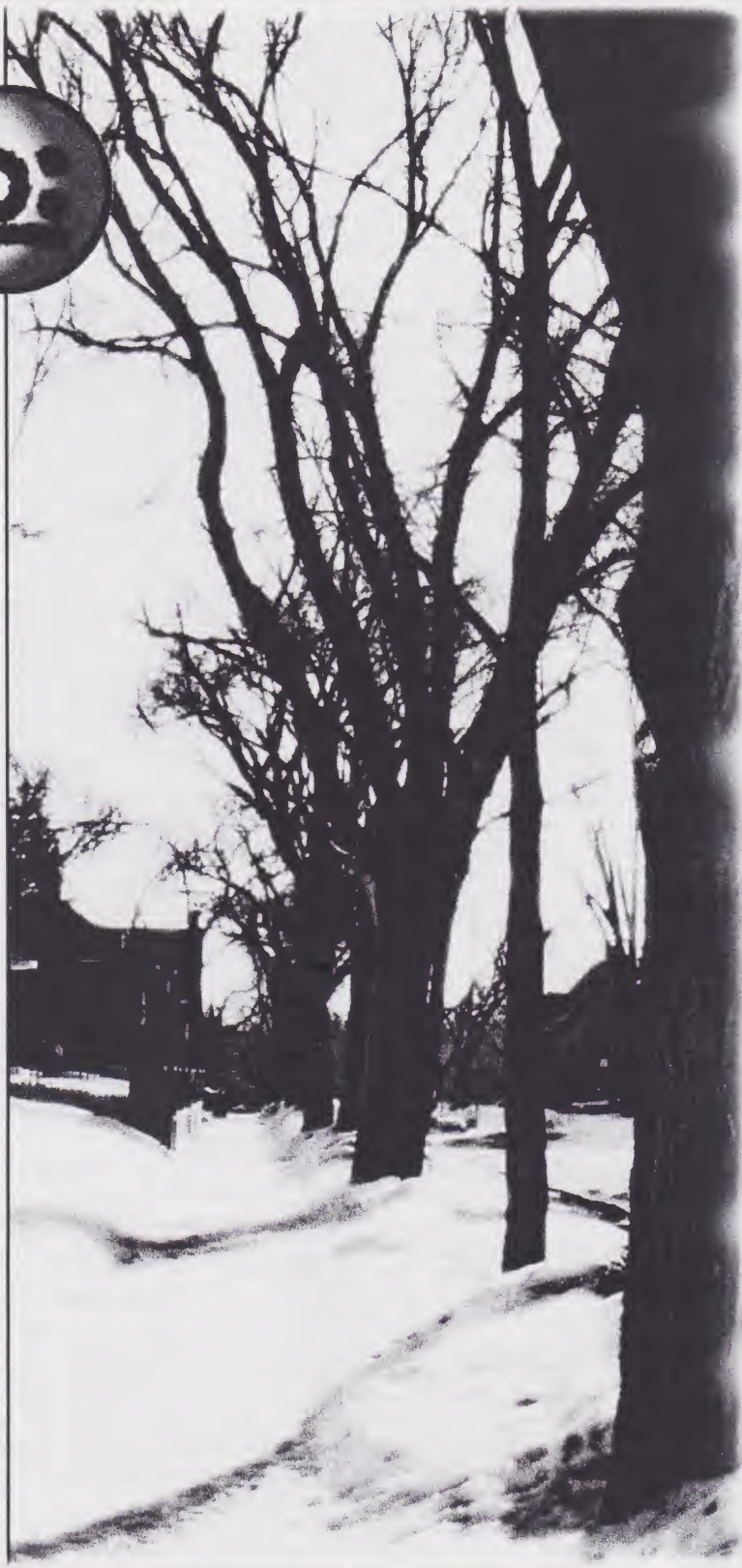
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introduction

Now that summer's here, let me reflect back to winter...

I had to get up today about an hour earlier than normal before going to work. Not only did I have an interview with One King Down to prepare for, but I also had to get gas for my car. I'm prone to daydreaming so if I don't get up early enough, I'll most surely be late. I grab my tape recorder, my ill-prepared questions, some stickers and a bagel and I'm out the door. After warming up my car, I head in the direction of the highway.

It's pretty much the dead of winter right now and the road looks frozen and white. The only bragging rights Minnesota has to claim are that it's colder here than just about anywhere else in the United States. It has snowed so much that they've banned parking on the even side of the streets and we won't see grass until March or April. What's worse is that it's constantly gray outside, leaving many Minnesotans afflicted with S.A.D., a disorder triggered by a lack of sunlight. People get depressed, sluggish, and tired all because of the clouds. It isn't surprising though, I knew that winter would cast its ominous pall on everything within its grasp. Possibly, this is winter's revenge.

The trees pass by quickly now that I'm on the highway; the monotony is somehow soothing. I'm running through all the ideas I have for my introduction. Where do I start, how much do I tell, and where do I draw the line between personal and public information? I've never been too excited about sharing things with strangers, but I suppose I am willing to take that risk. It is a risk, because you let people know what is really going on, rather than feigning fineness. Of my twenty minute drive to work, I'm a quarter of the way there. I'm on 94, just before I turn off onto 35W. When I graduated from college seven months ago, I had no idea I'd be traveling to the mall to go to work. But that's jumping ahead.

I've always been a good student, but in college, studying what I wanted, I was an exceptional student. I worked hard and in turn was rewarded through my grades and the

praise of my peers. After my last quarter, I went to Chicago to visit my parents. When I came back, I decided to take some time off to finish Backseat #2. I had to leave my previous job at the University because I was no longer a student so I wasn't earning any income. I wasn't worried, though, I had plenty of saved money to support myself for several months. Why get a job if you don't have to? My job search was not only late in coming, but it would also prove to be the beginning of a slow decent.

There are a lot of "should haves" but I should have started my job search sooner. Remember I took at least two months off? That's July and August. The zine came out sometime in September and was well received, even though it didn't get the circulation I would have liked. It had given me something to do in those months. After it was finished, my days were filled with Lenny Jones and Montel. While I was now fully catapulted into my job search, progress was slow. It goes beyond the time factor, though. #1, I had studied photography, but I decided that I wanted to go into graphic design instead, basically doing what I do in my zine but getting paid for it. My heart wasn't into photography, even though that was where I directed my job search. #2, sure, I wanted to do graphic design, but I didn't feel "qualified" to do it so I never pursued it. #3, I had no contacts. Despite countless people telling me what I should do, I felt lost and very confused. I read books, I tried to polish my resume, did this, did that, but still hadn't a clue as to how to go about getting a "real" job. In defense, I did nothing. It was much easier and there was no risk of rejection. So not only did I not have a clue as to how to get myself out of this joblessness, I was now becoming concerned about my money situation, not to mention the pressure of getting my career started. Plus, I had too much time to ruminate on my problems making for a dangerous mix. For a month and a half I sat in bed concocting a better pillow arrangement that would prop me up to see the TV, but still support my back. It's not as easy as it sounds...

To the world, it looked like I wasn't trying... and I wasn't. Normal daily activities, like getting up, taking a shower or calling someone became difficult. It wasn't that I couldn't pick up a phone, it was that I couldn't convince myself it was worth the effort. Nothing was worth it. I had fallen into this cycle: I wanted to do something about the way I felt, but I couldn't really motivate myself to do it. Using the same defense as before, I did nothing. But, doing nothing made it worse because I'd proven to myself that I was useless; so my self-esteem dropped even lower. Now, I was two emotional points lower than where I started. So, I wanted to do something, but I didn't have the energy, so I felt bad. Now, I was four points lower than when I started and the cycle continued.

There's something very deceiving about being a straight edge-vegan. You get this idea in your head that because you've resisted "temptations" that would make a weaker person



fall or because you've refused to accept societal standards, naturally, logically, you're a strong person. Your morals are strong, your will and determination are strong, you're a straight edge-vegan warrior for god sakes. Well, when I was still in my jammies at four o'clock watching Oprah, I didn't feel like a warrior; I felt worthless. I was ashamed that I couldn't pull myself out of this mud I had sunken into. When I think back to this point in my life, even though it was only a couple of months ago, it seems like years. Each day was worse than the next and each day it was harder and harder to get up in the morning, knowing that there was nothing to look forward to in the day. I want to make it clear though, depression isn't just about a bad day or a blue mood, it sucks you in and changes your perceptions about what is going on around you. Things that you normally like doing aren't as enticing anymore. You stop calling your friends. Your life becomes a world where negative thoughts dominate and you start to live solely within yourself. Depression is a disease, and when a disease persists without treatment, it only grows worse.

A plow truck merges in front of me, startling me out of my line of thinking right before I'm supposed to exit. I don't mind the interruption, though, because the salt dropping from the back of the truck looks like ping pong balls dancing all over the road. You learn to treasure the few surprises you get in the winter.

I think back to October. It was still warm then. Time had gone by as usual... either too fast, or not fast enough. On the night of the ninth, I got a call around 10:30. I had already gone to bed and I remember stumbling to reach it through the narrow space between the wall and the bed. It was Bryan. He said that Mike had killed himself. I think my response was something like, "Thanks." He was brief, but I was just grateful that someone had called me.

Our relationship was minimal. Bearing that in mind, I felt bad going to the funeral. It was stuck in my head that I wasn't allowed to miss him or grieve his loss because there were people who knew him better, who hurt more, and had the right to miss him. I guess I don't miss Mike, per se, I miss the potential to get to know him. I remember him is a really happy, explorative, affectionate and intelligent person. It seems ironic, but it goes to show how easily people hide their pain. Now, I think mostly of his friends, those who had the misfortune to see Mike's pain with their own eyes. The one thing I won't forget is when they closed the casket; trapping what I had always thought of as Mike in a dark place that was supposedly better than where we were.

My drive comes to a conclusion as I enter the mall park-

ing lot. It is amusing for me to think that the largest mall in America is what saved me from my depression. What a twisted world we live in. I was hired sometime in the middle of November. I was so happy that I finally had a job, that I would be earning some money, and that someone wanted me that I really didn't care what I was doing. I just wanted to do my job well and learn what I could from this experience. Now, four months later, I'm beginning to wonder if having a job is equally as depressive and disturbing as not having one. My mental state isn't all that much better, I just happen to be at work all the time and therefore don't have too much time to ponder the point. I have to admit though, I've never thought I was cut out for the "real" world. I absolutely abhor dealing with everyday nuisances like insurance, taxes, jobs, careers, pensions, dishes, soap scum, oil changes, spring cleaning, making phone calls, or basically anything that entitles you to be a grown-up. The transition from learner to worker has been difficult. My role has been completely altered and what they expect out of me at work isn't half of what I expect from myself everyday. It's difficult to tolerate the dumbing down of my abilities. My happiness is intrinsically linked to what I do, and for now and probably always that means my "job." It doesn't take too much effort to see that this isn't getting me where I need to be.

At the end of December, my Grandmother had a heart attack. It was a mild one and, after much debate, she went ahead and had quadruple bypass surgery. That's quite an undertaking considering she's 85. She made it out of the surgery and is living in a spe-



cial nursing home. It is more like a nursing apartment. She lives there on her own, in her own apartment, but she has people to look after her. From what I understand, she really isn't the same anymore. She suffered at least one mild stroke that has made her paranoid and a little goofy. Her brain has somehow let her down, malfunctioned to the point where is can't be restored.

It's been quite a year for me (I still think of years in terms of school years... September to September) and who knows what is yet to come. These events seem to point me in the same direction, but what that is I don't know. Everyday at work I think about how I will end this introduction. Sometimes I come up with something brilliant, and most of the time I stare into space with no idea what I will write. I've had a good chance to examine what my function is in life. I'm here to appreciate, learn, give, find, analyze, love and I'm sure many other all-encompassing words I can't remember at this point. I just need to find the most efficient way to do these things so I have time for every one of them and so nothing will be sacrificed. I was watching Jenny Jones the other day and it was about people who had been in life-threatening situations: fires, robberies, assault, etc. They were then reunited with the 911 operator who helped them out. It was an OK show but is also worried me. I have a small apartment and my phone is centrally located. If something were to happen to my boyfriend who I live with, outside of the reach of the phone, it would be impossible for me to talk to the 911 operator and help him. After seeing myself at the lowest point possible, seeing my parent's and others worried about me, after Mike's death, after my Grandmother's recent heart attack, I've decided that I need a longer phone cord, just in case.

"Rock music didn't, 'just happen,' it was a carefully masterminded plan by none other than Satan himself."

-Rebecca Brown, author of Prepare for War (1992)

"I've never heard of an ex-feminist. Ex-communists, ex-moonies, ex-convicts, no ex-feminists. Once that light goes on, at whatever age, it remains on."

-novelist Ali Kates Shulman, from The Conversation Begins

"Fear of things invisible is the natural seed of that which every one in himself calleth religion."

-Thomas Hobbes from Leviathan (1651)

"{A}s children tremble and fear everything in the blind darkness, so we in the light sometimes fear what is not more to be feared than the things children in the light hold in terror."

-Lucretius from On the Nature of Things (ca. 60 B.C.)

"People have an extraordinary ability to find ways to divide themselves up-by race, by class, by football team. People have to have something. Even anarchists rally under the black flag. It's absolutely amazing, these endless dichotomous distinctions between in-group and out-group. Why else could folks go so crazy over something as ridiculous as the Super Bowl in January?"

-Edward O. Wilson, Ph.D. author of Sociobiology: The New Synthesis

In 1812, Lucy Brewster disguised herself as a man and joined the Marine Corps. She fought aboard the Constitution and served her full 3 year enlistment.

One third of all violent crimes against women in the U.S. involve family members or friends, says a report from the New York City-based Commonwealth Fund Commission on Women's Health. Only one in 20 crimes against men does.



"Mao Tse Tung taught people that the only way that they could rid of these people with guns, and give the people homes with sufficient food, and the power to control their own destiny, was to take up a long arms struggle against their oppressor. It's something that I think will inevitably be the solution of our people in America today. So one of his statements was, that in order to attain your freedom, you're going to need political power. And the only way to achieve political power is to get a gun."

-Zack de la Rocha, *Anti-Matter* 1993/94.

In China, it has been believed for centuries that blood is a precious gift and that its loss dishonors the family. They also believe that in order to ensure their health in the afterlife, their bodies must be buried whole. It is easy to see why blood and organ donations are so rare that illegal methods and practices have come about to fill the need. Unfortunately, they've been taking these organs from prisoners. The human rights groups estimate that 2000 to 3000 organs a year are taken from prisoners and this accounts for 90 percent of the total number of organs donated. It is interesting to note that China has recently made 68 offenses punishable by death. This is an extremely harsh policy that includes offenses such as tax evasion, publishing pornography and stealing a cow all warranting death as punishment. But isn't likely this will stop because surgeons make quite a profit with this system. They strip the newly executed body of the parts they need and then resell them at inflated price to wealthy and powerful patients. The hospital staff also receives benefits from questionable practices. Hospitals give incentives such as extra vacations and bonuses to donate blood. Workers often lend their cards to blood gangs (those who plunder the poor and weak of their blood with the lure of food, jobs or housing) who then sell the blood with their identification. The workers get their perks, and the gangs get the money.

-Marie Claire, Dec. 1996.

During World War II, "comfort stations" were set up by the Japanese Imperial Army. Women were stolen from their homes and forced to "ease" the soldiers in these government sanctioned brothels that ran from Manchuria to Burma. Girls as young as 11 were raped and tortured: they were confined in cramped berths, one had her breast

cut off, others burned with cigarettes, others shocked with electric cords. Many died, either crippled with disease, slain by fleeing troops, or left to starve in the jungle. There were no relief groups for these women and the ones that survived have carried misplaced shame with them for most of their lives. All in all, as many as 200,000 Korean, Chinese, and other Asian women were abducted and repeatedly assaulted. Until recently, the Japanese government denied the existence of these brothels. The

women's plight didn't come to light until a survivor went public with her story. Afterwards, many followed, now in their 70's, staging weekly protests in front of Seoul's Japanese Embassy, marching in front of the White House, and raising their plight to human rights organizations. In December, the Justice Department said it would bar 16 Japanese WW II veterans -several suspected to be involved in operating comfort stations- from entering the country. Acknowledgment, yes, but it seems little consolation for the countless lives marred by insidious acts.

-U.S. News and World Report, Dec. 16, 1996.

Notes...



Aliens don't exist!

Are We Alone

by Paul Davies

This book isn't so much out to prove that aliens exist either way, although it does examine the possibilities. What he explores is, in the event that aliens exist, how this will impact humans as a species. Davies explores the philosophical, political, and religious implications of the discovery of aliens.

While this book may be located in the science section at the bookstore, it deserves a place in the philosophy section. Davies meditations on the subject are complete delve beyond the typical, "do they exist or not?" mode of reporting. If you're interested in the intersection of between aliens and philosophy, check this out.

Ok, so who knows if there are aliens or not, but after I wrote an article in Bs #2 about why we believe in UFO's, I got plenty of letters from kids who didn't know how to make an informed decision about this topic. Not only is there a ton of false information out there that tries to pass itself off as fact-based, but it is hard to know how to ferret out what's true and what's not, what's real and what's imagined. Here are two books that take a critical eye to all these claims of abductions and UFO's and will give you a different outlook on the situation.



The Demon Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark

by Carl Sagan

"Casting a wide net through history and culture, Sagan examines

and authoritatively debunks such celebrated fallacies as witchcraft, faith healings, demons and UFO's," says the back of his book. Not only does he



present this information, but he gives us tools to be skeptical ourselves and shed light on the unexplained.

Carl Sagan has authored countless books on science, many in astronomy. He's maintained such a formidable position within the literary world because his writing style is fluid and easy for any science newcomer to understand. This book is informative, and a pleasure to read.

Human Overpopulation

an article by Freeman Wicklund



If a boat is so full of people that it is sinking, how many more people do you need to add to the boat to keep it from sinking?

The Most Neglected Animal Rights Issue

Do you ever get frustrated with people who don't understand the urgency of your issue? Maybe you have an acquaintance who eats chicken even though you've spent hours explaining the horrors of poultry production to her. Or maybe you can't get your friend to stop using Styrofoam cups at his parties. Or maybe your roommate is not willing to give up her toothpaste that was tested on animals. Do you know what I'm talking about—those situations where people who understand the problem and are often sympathetic with your cause, simply don't seem to think their personal involvement in the problem matters? It can be extremely disheartening and frustrating.

So why am I bringing this up? Because I want to talk about a very important issue that too often produces a similar reaction from animal activists. But I know that you are better than that. You won't ignore the issue. You will read the information, think about it, and examine your involvement with this problem with an open mind because you care, and out of courtesy for me. And for that, I thank you.

Readers Concerns

So what is this issue I want us to examine? It's human overpopulation. That stated, I realize why some people might feel uncomfortable discussing this issue. Some readers might already have three or more children, and the mention of human overpopulation might make them extremely defensive. They might feel unfairly judged, or worse, feel this issue as an attack on their children. I can understand these concerns, which is why I want to make one thing clear from the outset: population control is not about blaming people. Their children were born in the past when most people had no knowledge of population growth and its impact on animals. People with children should not feel threatened. In fact, I don't see why someone with twelve children couldn't be a population control activist — I don't let the fact that I ate meat, eggs, and dairy products for the first fourteen years of my life keep me from promoting veganism now. So if they are not procreating now, what's the difference?

Another reason some people are unwilling to discuss human overpopulation is because of another issue that is inevitably brought up: abortion. Pro-lifers become uncomfortably nervous with this issue because it sounds to them like a license to kill. However, that is not the case. There are many solutions which do not involve abortion, and we should never promote abortion as part of the solution. Any population control campaign that advocates abortion will spend its time debating the ethics of abortion instead of preventing pregnancies. We need to keep people focused on the problem at hand and not get side-tracked by other issues.

The Problem in Human Terms

So what is the problem with human over-population? Well, from a human perspective, the more people we have, the more we exacerbate the conditions of war, famine, nuclear waste, deforestation, urban crowd-

ing, pollution, poverty and all other social ills.

How are these problems related to human overpopulation? Take war for example. People are driven to war when they lack the resources or land to provide for themselves. If the United States' population was low enough that it could be sustained by the oil produced within its own borders, we might have never been involved in the Gulf War. But the United States population is not decreasing, it is increasing by 3 million people every year — 1 million of which is from immigration, and 2 million of which are from births—meaning that we will desire even more resources, and be involved in more wars. If every country had a fraction of their current population, many territorial and ethnic disputes would simply not exist.

We can also see how population effects poverty. Far from being the cornucopia we once thought it was, the Earth has limited resources. As it is burdened with more people, its ability to provide for their needs and wants decreases. Did you know that of the 5.8 billion people on earth today, over one billion of them live in absolute poverty and misery? This means that more people live in poverty today, than used to live on the entire planet less than 200 years ago. The fact that we can't adequately provide basic necessities for nearly one fifth of our species should alert us to the realities of the human overpopulation problem.

The Problem as it Relates to Animals

Unfortunately the problem of human overpopulation does not stop at humanity's border, it also plays havoc on animals and the environment. On a basic level, the more people there are, the more people there will be to eat meat, wear fur, go to circuses and rodeos, hunt and demand animal research. It wouldn't be a stretch of the imagination to figure that if America's population was half its current size, the number of animals slaughtered for food would also be halved. If this were the case, more than 3 billion animals per year would be spared the horrors of factory farming and the slaughterhouse.

Does this mean human overpopulation would not be a problem if everyone became a vegan animal liberationists?



Sadly, no. Because just as humans war with each other over land and "resources," we war with the animals over them too. Yet the animals don't have a fighting chance against our weapons, technology, and ravenous ability to consume. If we want some "natural resources," we will take them. The fact that billions of animals will be killed or displaced is inconsequential. "Natural

Resource" is just another way of saying the spoils we have plundered from the animals' homes. All that humanity has, we have stolen from the animals. Lush forests, vast prairies, and raging rivers have made way for our lumber, cropland, and dams. There is no humane way to clear cut a forest, or construct a paved road across country, or to obtain the metal needed to make an airplane. All of these things necessitate evicting animals from their homes, destroying their communities, and directly or indirectly killing them. While humans-vegan or not-consume, the human population will continue to be a problem.

Just as the United States—which represents less than 5% of the world's total population—consumes 30% of the world's resources, the human population which is only one species among millions, consumes the majority of the world's resources. If we believe that animal's interests deserve equal consideration, then we must take action now to promote a more equal distribution of resources. Decreasing our consumption is important, but most people are unwilling to give up their cars, homes, books, schools, supermarkets, and other things we take for granted. So if we ever want to see substantial improvements in maintaining animal habitat, it is imperative we decrease our human population.

Every new human brought into the world is a vote for humans and a death wish for animals. This is easy to see if you have ever worked to protect wildlife. When you talk to people who think that goose poop warrants a death sentence for geese, or nibbled gardens means deer should be killed, the need for human population control becomes obvious. Everywhere humans and animal interact, there is a river of animal blood. The more humans there are, the more blood their will be.

And what will happen if we don't take measures to decrease the human population? Will we finally liberate animals from the vivisection labs, factory farms, fur farms, circuses, rodeos and zoos, only to place them in a world of asphalt, glass, and concrete?

Will the best we have to offer the animals be the lifeless husk of our once lush world?

And what will we do for the baby turtles who die of suffocation as their homes are paved over? Or the snake crushed by the weight of the bulldozer making room for a new condominium? Or the panther who lost her life in the fire that destroyed her jungle home so humans could use the land to plant crops. We can protest this destruction and maybe delay the inevitable, or we can go to the root of the problem and start fighting human overpopulation now.

Taking Action

So what can we do about it? For starters, we must stop breeding. Some people might think it's fine for couples to have one or two children to help create a population "balance." I disagree. Population balance is not a goal, it's a start. We need a drastic decrease

in human population if we ever hope to create a just and equitable world for animals. And the only humane way to decrease human population is to not add to it. It is imperative that those of us who are conscientious and responsible set a good example by not procreating from this moment forward.

Now some people might argue that one's decision to have children is a personal decision. This is true. Procreation is a personal decision. But eating meat, wearing fur, and hunting are all "personal decisions." The fact that our decisions are personal, does not erase the truth that our decisions have moral consequences. When bringing more humans into the world dramatically impacts the animals in a negative way, we-as the animals' voices-cannot be silent.

We need to recognize that human overpopulation is just as much an animal liberation issue as is our campaigns against vivisection. Educating others about this problem is essential. Animal groups should produce literature or publish articles in their newsletters on human overpopulation. As part of this education, we need to help change long-standing values that promote procreation. Newly-weds should not be harassed about when they expect their first child. Sterility should not be treated as a disease that needs a cure. Women should never be made to feel that they have to give birth to be important. Instead, we need to support couples and individuals who choose to live child-free. We also need to make operations like vasectomies and tubal ligation more available to young adults. Too often, doctors will refuse to give these operations if the person has not yet had a child. We also need to support legislation that will help family planning projects and humane population control measures in our own country and abroad. People who desire to be parents should be educated on the human overpopulation problem and informed of the thousands of needy children who are waiting to be adopted into a loving home.

One of the benefits of working on this issue is that it is an excellent way to forge alliances between other human rights and environmental organizations that are already taking

issue. You have a decision to make, are you going to be part of the solution or part of the problem? Why or why not? Do you think it is natural for people to have children? Do you think breeding is one way to ensure that veganism and animal rights will be passed to the next generation? Have you always wanted to have children because you know you will be one of the best parents a child could have? If you have questions such as these, I ask you to assume my identity and guess what my response to them might be. In other words, really work at seeing both sides of the issue.

Together we can curb human overpopulation and save humans, animals, and the environment.

For more information on human overpopulation, contact:
World Population Balance
 PO Box 23472
 Minneapolis, MN 55423
 Ph: (612) 869-1640

Just as the United States-which represents less than 5% of the world's total population-consumes 30% of the world's resources, the human population which is only one species

among millions, consumes the majority of the world's resources.

action to curb human population. This is a perfect issue for all three movements to champion together.

Last Words

Whenever I discuss this issue, I fear I have done an inadequate job. The far-reaching implications of human overpopulation are so enormous that I cannot do it justice. That is why I am asking you to spend the next few days analyzing how human overpopulation effects the problems in the world that concern you. These problems could be anything from traffic jams, oil spills, or hunting to the AIDS epidemic, species extinction, or nuclear power. Look at these issues. Consider how human overpopulation impacts them. Imagine what would happen to these problems if our population was halved. Examine all of the ways human overpopulation exacerbates your problems and those of the animals.

And while you are doing this, examine your personal feelings on the





Obstacle's

by Emmanuel Ortiz

Name a woman in America who has power. Nope, sorry, Xena the warrior princess is fictitious. Susan Powters? Wrong Answer. She has a self-esteem complex and a phobia of the human body. One more guess... Can't think of any? I'm not surprised. Maybe you did think of one, maybe you said Hillary Rodham Clinton or Senator Carol Moseley-Braun. That's getting warmer. In order to answer the question what is a woman with power, I first had to ask myself a more basic question: what is "power?" To answer this, I grabbed two books off the bookshelf, a dictionary and a thesaurus. Looking up "power" in the dictionary, I found little that surprised me. Of the eleven definitions that weren't about math, physics or angels, nine focused on legal, political, and/or military authority; two definitions were dedicated to physical strength. Clearly this shows mainstream male-dominated society's view that true power lies in controlling not just our own, but also other people's lives.

Next I turned to a thesaurus to look up synonyms and antonyms to "power." My hunch was that words synonymous with "power" would imply a certain masculine ideal. I found words like force, influence, control, and muscle alongside words like endowment, manly, manlike, masculine, male, virile, and manful. Recognizing that power is constructed as so blatantly male, one thing may be certain: that the value placed upon weakness, power's chief antonym, (and submission, antonymous to authority) must imply a feminine connection. The thesaurus revealed words like helpless, incapacity, fatherless, feebleness, nervousness, and lame, in juxtaposition to obviously woman targeted words like effeminacy, femininity, softness,

unmanned (which also implies heterosexism), and defenselessness.

This limited yet revealing sample of the American lexicon discloses the expectations of power dynamics based on sex/gender. Simply put, Man (read white, heterosexual, wealthy and "Christian") is supposed to be powerful and in authority. Woman, and all other social class minorities, are supposed to submit to Man. Those are the rules and there are consequences for those who break the rules.

Questions of power just keep popping up, and must be answered if we are to determine if women (either as individuals or as a class) hold any power. The next question that demands an answer is, "Where is power?" According to Webster, power can be found in the institutions of politics, law, and military. I might add that power in America can also be found in big business, the corporate giants, not the least of these being mainstream media. Now that we know where power is, we can comb the above institutions for any signs of power (again, power and authority can be used interchangeably here) in the hands of women.

To begin, let's go right to the top- Washington D.C. Let's not stop there, let's go to the top of D.C.- the White House. Is there a woman with power in the White House? Does Hillary Rodham Clinton, the woman who holds the president's heart (or is it Gennifer Flowers?) hold any of his cards? In the first two years of the Clinton presidency, many joked that they questioned who really did run the White House. Hillary's ambition, intelligence and independence coupled with her staunch refusal to live in the

Climbing a Broken Ladder

to Women's Achievement of Power

President's shadow as the White Housewife, have created quite a stir both among politicians and the media (which are only as liberal as the conservative tycoons who own them). The couple has stabbingly been referred to as "President Clinton and her husband Bill" while Hillary's character has earned her the term of no endearment "the White House Witch." Simultaneously, her championing of such causes as health care reform and child rearing have earned her comparison to Eleanor Roosevelt, noted as one of the most legendary of First Ladies. Certainly it may be said that Hillary Rodham is influential and inspiring to many women (and men?) who aspire to political accomplishments, but does this leave her in a position of power? We still don't have single payer health care and quite possibly, the Republican-led backlash to Hillary's outspoken support for health care reform may have created an atmosphere of intolerance that has led this nation further away from the remote possibility of achieving a socialized health care system. Is this step backwards a failure of Hillary's? Of course not. Rather, it is the work of reactionary misogynists with legislative clout. The culpability is not limited to Newt Gingrich and his goons. The Democrats themselves have called upon Bill Clinton to mitigate Hillary's position; in effect, to shut her up, because a strong woman's voice emanating from the White House is a threat to the patriarchy. After all, patriarchy pledges no party affiliation.

Hillary's attempts to bring about positive reform in the system of child rearing have fared even worse. The welfare system has been dealt a crippling blow this past year with the implementation of the "workfare" legislation. Contrary to what Congress would have you believe, this legislation will only widen the gap between rich and poor, increase crime and drug abuse, and leave single mothers with a further sense of hopelessness and rage. Hillary Rodham Clinton's recognition that, "it takes a village to raise a child," will become a chilling reality as single parents and other low income or unemployed families have even fewer resources to fend for themselves. If these families can pool their resources together to create communities,

they may find themselves able to raise a single child, but how about a village full of children? A handful of suits in Washington and another handful who own the media monopoly don't want to hear the outrage of women and poor people, be it from the White House or the ghetto. If the puppet-masters in suits won't hear it, we won't either.

So where is Hillary Rodham Clinton's power? She can't introduce a bill to legislature, she has no veto power, and holds only trophy positions in policy-making. Everything she does, every political maneuver she makes, must be filtered through her husband's office, not to mention the Democratic Party. And isn't that Bill's signature on the bottom of the Welfare Reform act? Hillary's character, ethics, and ability to lead have also been made targets by political opponents and the media through scapegoating her as culprit in the Whitewater fiasco while other prominent male figures slip out the back door, thus avoiding the finger-pointing and revealing background checks. Is this all coincidental, or is this a plot by the patriarchy to keep a woman away from true channels of power and influence?

Please tell me, of what importance is Hillary's new hair-do or latest fashion statement? Absolutely none, yet, since the 1992 elections, pages of magazines and hours of airtime have kept our minds on these and other trivialities rather than the real issues; for example her stance on abortion, gun control, or foreign policy. This type of air-brushed and slanted portrayal of Mrs. Clinton brain-washes us into believing that the latest fashion trends and hair-dos, rather than pressing political and social issues, are the areas of primary interest not only to the American public, but to Hillary Rodham Clinton herself.

Perhaps it must be conceded, then, that Hillary has little "power" as defined by this society. That is, she wields little political clout, and that which she does is monitored by the powers that be. This is not to say that Hillary Rodham Clinton is not influential, nor is it to say that her political career is uneventful and failed. Despite her Democratic Party affiliation, Hillary is a capable and progressive leader. It is not her own shortcomings that prevent

her from full political potential, but rather, the shortcomings of the very system within which she works.

Just as women are being denied power in the White House, so are they being shafted in Congress. Of the 535 members of the current (105th) congress, there are only 56 women. Where is the representation of women's voices in this? How can we possibly expect women's voices to be heard, concerns addressed, and progress made with a legislative body so unapologetically fallacy-sculpted? The truth is we can't, and we won't. Not when the 56 female members of Congress that represent 11 % of the whole reflects only a 3.5 increase over the 104th Congress for another 184 years- the year 2181. And what about state government? How many women governors do you think there are? If the 11% representation figure carried over from Congress to the state executive level, there would be one woman serving as governor for every ten states in America, or five total. Wishful thinking. Currently, there is only one woman serving as governor in the United States. One: New Jersey's pro-choice Republican governor Christine Todd Whitman. Why does the state executive level fare so much worse for women than Congress? Because there is a greater concentration of power in a governor's seat than in that of an individual Congress person's seat, and perhaps, even each house of Congress. This patrocetric nation and its 50 constituent states are scared to death of the idea of being governed by a truly democratic and equal system.

The military is another institution in which women find that the ladders to their success and/or power have been booby tapped and broken by men. If the government is the kingpin of capitalist patriarchy, the armed forces are easily its barrel-chested, gun-toting goons. What the government decrees, the military enforces, whether by violence, coercion, or threat. There can be little denial that one of the fundamental functions of American or any other contemporary military is to enforce the respective nation-state's patriarchal rule. This is true of a capitalist, socialist, monarchal, or any other government. With such a function, how can any military defend a place for women within its ranks? The question has never been addressed to my satisfaction and it is clear that America's armed forces are not doing anything to find an answer. Further, it would seem at times that just the opposite is true: that the military is doing what is can to keep women extremely marginalized in service or

removed from its ranks entirely. Recent events can be examined to prove this statement.

In the past 20 years, recruitment of women (and people of color) has seen a steady increase. Still, women make up only 13 percent of the armed forces. More notable than the increase in numbers in the slight (though noteworthy, when you consider that it's the military we're talking about) expansion of roles women can play and institutions they can enter. The 1990's have seen women earn the right to fly combat missions, not to mention the first woman to graduate from West Point at the head of her class. In the past couple of years, the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute (V.M.I.) have been forced to open their doors to women cadets. Shannon Faulkner sued the Citadel to allow her

admittance and won her case. She was admitted but subsequently withdrew after a few short weeks, citing extreme abuse and harassment at the hands of a number of male cadets. The following year, four female cadets enrolled. Six months into the academic year, two have dropped out after being subject to physical and emotional abuse, including having their clothes set on fire and being physically accosted by male upperclassmen. Two of the cadets remain, but for how long is anybody's guess. Just recently, V.M.I. was forced to open its doors to women but have been fighting the court decision tooth and nail. Why? Because its administrators felt threatened, male domination is being challenged at the institutional level. Not however, without retaliation. The above incidents at the Citadel and V.M.I. are only two of a string of backlashes to women's

involvement in the military. Recently, reports have come forth of sexual harassment and rape at training camps across the nation. When a national hotline was opened up for people to report incidents of sexual assault in the military, it was flooded with nearly 2,000 complaints, predominantly by women. These attacks on women and womanhood are both personal and political. They are the acts of individuals and small groups of men and constant heavy foot of the oppressive patriarchy on the throats of women. The military and the government, both clearly identified within these pages as male dominated power structures, are sending a clear message to women: "You do not belong here. If you enter, you will be targeted." Despite the warning, women are still fighting their way up the broken ladders to power and success. What it will come to is anybody's guess.

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It seems that we know so little about homosexuality. Because of this I feel that we should not ostracize those who are homosexual, but rather respect them as we would anyone else. Also, however, because of our ignorance homosexuality should neither be encouraged or strongly discouraged.

This survey is gay — literally. Bisexuality is absolutely wrong. It's not normal at all and if it is a fad at all that is an absolute farce. Something as important and powerful as love cannot be a "one-way-or-the-other" kind of thing! No way.

Bisexuality is not an option for me, I believe it is morally wrong and disgusting. Mankind was not created to explore sexual feelings with those of the same sex! Bisexuals need to realize that what they are doing is completely wrong and it not looked upon highly from the Guy upstairs. Other than that, thanks for the free pen.

A Survey Bi the Book...

Recently, gay and lesbian issues have been quite prevalent in the media. The Defense of Marriage Act and Ellen coming out have been both bad and good instances of coverage. But what of bisexuality, the often miscounted sister/brother to homosexuality? In this survey, conducted by the University of Minnesota, 143 students responded to questions about the nature of bisexuality. At the end of the survey, the group was asked to give comments. Judging from their responses, we still have a long way to go in the area of understanding sexuality and our personal feelings about it.

Sexuality is a personal matter and should be dealt with as such.

I personally love women. I can't (and don't even want to) imagine being attracted to a gay. I don't really give a damn which way others want to swing but I would really rather not even hear about it. Anatomically, that guys and guys is wrong. I realize that just because a guy might be attracted to a guy, they might not be having sex, but we are talking about intimate relationships, and at the top of the intimate hierarchy is sex. And as previously mentioned just isn't right, so if you want to be wrong, keep it to yourself. Guys are meant to be having sex with women, that is the way god, or evolution designed it, and if you want to argue with god, take it up with him.

I think gays and lesbians are like that because of heredity. Bi's on the other hand, are basically unsure of what they are so it's more likely they could be going through a fad.

I think bisexual/gay/lesbian relationships are wrong, but it's important for everyone to remember that whether or not they agree with that, they should always treat those that choose to be bisexual with respect.

I believe that sexual preferences are learned; every individual has the freedom to choose his or her sexual orientation. Recently I read that Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Albert Einstein College of medicine maintain that homosexuality and bisexuality are the result of environmental factors and personal choice, not genetics. I believe that one's sexual orientation is an issue involving morality. The Bible is clear on this: "If man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable."—Leviticus 20:13.

I think bisexuality is unnatural and is contrary to the laws of nature. God never intended members of the opposite sex to have sexual relations with another—I think this much is physically and anatomically obvious.

As a Christian, I believe that man and women were created to be with the opposite sex only. It says in the Bible that God destroyed any city that practiced homosexuality.

Everyone needs to be loved. Whether it be with a female or male it is still love and should not matter.

Some people are too quick to quote scriptures to condemn gay or bisexual relationships. If God truly destroyed several cities that practiced homosexuality as mentioned in the Bible, why did not God destroy ancient Greece for glorifying bisexuality that lasted more than 500 years? Isn't God unjust? Thus, I believe that the God is only serious about homosexual rapes, not gay or bi love. It is never wrong to love someone of either gender. I have a message for those who want to be serious about God's word: Either we must obey everything in the Bible or nothing. We cannot be selective with God's word. For example, if you want to quote scripture to condemn homosexuality, then you must follow everything that you often do not want to obey. Would you give up eating seafood? Would you abstain any meat melted with cheese? Would you refuse to buy any clothes that are interwoven of two or more different materials? Would you rest every Saturday? Would you marry a wife of your brother who just passed on? Even if you do not obey any one of the above, you are demanded by the Old Testament scriptures to death penalty. We should not get discouraged; rather, we should focus on something that is beyond our control; that is LOVE. It is never a crime to love someone, whether you are straight, gay, or bi. Love is more powerful and above any law. No law can stop you from having the right to love or even marry each other.

interview:



onekingdown

For some reason, I've always had incredible luck picking bands to interview. I ran across One King Down as they were visiting the biggest mall in America, and my place of employment. I had never heard either of their 2 CD's but, on a whim, I asked them if they wanted to do an interview. Poorly prepared, I learned that this straight edge band from Albany is sincere about their endeavors and an all-around incredible hardcore band. What follows is my attempt to get to know them and their place within hardcore. (If your wondering about their name, they say it doesn't mean anything, but they hope people will interpret it for themselves.)

Nicole: What prompted Equal Vision Record's (EVR) interest in you?

Bill Scoville (bass): The record was originally recorded for Chapter Records from California. We went in, recorded six songs, mixed it, and finished it. But, the guy from that label said he couldn't pay for it right away and we thought that would be the first sign of many delays to come on that label. There was just one thing after another with him. Steve from EVR had heard our demo and our first CD, so when he heard the other guy couldn't pay for them, he said he would definitely be into putting something like that out. We discussed it with him and eventually it came out on EVR.

Nicole: In the past, they've been known for having Krishna bands and definitely bands with set politics. How does that make you feel: do you fit right in or are you uncomfortable with that?

Bill: We definitely don't fit into the religious mold, but the band is definitely

set in its ways. The music is really up front. The history of the label has never had any factor in us going with that label, like not signing with them. The thing that mattered most was how the label was run and what kind of people we had pushing our stuff. Shelter's gone, 108's gone...

Rob Fusco (vocals): Crown of Thornz is gone. Bill: We're talking about religious bands...

Rob: Oh yeah...

Bill: Prema, they're not devotees anymore. Refuse to Fall is gone... So Equal Vision, while it is runned, owned and operated by devotees, has other interests besides Krishna Consciousness.

Nicole: You've been together for how long?

All: This line up?

Bill: We've been together for two years.

Nicole: Now that you're on a more prominent label, even though you've been together for two years, is this the beginning for you, or just a continuation of what you have always been doing?

Michael Scoville (lead guitar): This is definitely the beginning, putting this record out.

Bill: We've always had a steady amount of progress since this line up has been together. We started out basically just playing in basements and we've constantly built up more and more recognition from different scenes. We've gone from basements to clubs in the Albany scene, to getting to Massachusetts and the surrounding Northeast. It's constantly growing, but the EVR release is definitely the beginning of national and even international progress.

Nicole: *You're on tour now promoting your new album Bloodlust Revenge. For the Minneapolis show you had a \$100 guarantee, which is OK, but to get you out here, it's nothing. There are a lot of people who think that you should just come out here, entertain us and that's what hardcore is about...*

Rob: Yeah, I agree, entertainment, energy, all that stuff is what hardcore is about. It's nice to have a lot of bands play at your own clubs, but they don't realize that bands have to eat and that bands have to get from point a to point b and you can't do that without money. If they haven't been in the position of a band that is touring, that's trying to make a living off of being on the road, they're not going to relate and they are not going to have the same understanding as someone who has been here. It's hard; it's hard to do.

Bill: We're in the second week of a six week tour and we're learning so much. We drove eleven hours from Indianapolis to Minneapolis just to get to the damn show. Thank God we had a place to stay. It's hard, you don't even know where you're going to sleep that night or if you're going to eat... living on peanut butter sandwiches and stuff.

Rob: Especially with me being the only vegan member

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of the band. It's a pain right in the ass to find stuff to eat.
Nicole: *You came here all the way from New York and there is a definite image and sound there. Do you think that shaped what you were to become in the beginning?*
Bill: The sound definitely, because we grew up listening to those bands. Sick of It All used to play in Albany every couple of weeks...all the NY bands used to play, all the time. Those were the bands we were into. So, naturally our sound grew from that.

Nicole: *Has anyone ever accused you of being a typical hardcore band?*

Rob: To our face, or behind our backs? Sure, people talk shit.

Bill: That's what we try to stay away from: being a typical hardcore band...musically or with our image. We try to do our own thing. I don't know if we are doing it or not, but we're trying.

Matthew Wood (guitar): I don't think in any review we have been labeled as just a hardcore band...

Derrick Van Wie (drums): If anyone calls us typical it'll be in Albany. We're not very well revered there.

Michael: We aren't regarded as a typical hardcore band, we're regarded as a typical metal band. If someone hasn't seen us, or heard our music, or have talked to someone who said we were typical NY hardcore, Snapcase or what-

ever, then I think that when someone sees us, or listens to the music, there's definitely a difference between us and a lot of other bands.

Nicole: *What of your contemporaries from NY, who is distinctly NY, but original, too?*

Derrick: Uh...it's hard to say...

Bill: Distinctly NY, but original, too...

Derrick: Earth Crisis is pretty NY, but really original at the same time.

Nicole: *What do you think makes them that way?*

Derrick: They just write really good music, it's not really so predictable... You either love them or you hate them.

Nicole: *What about being straight edge... Would it matter if you weren't?*

Rob: To whom?

Nicole: *To all of you. Would it matter if one of you weren't?*

Matthew: It would probably bother me.

Bill: Yeah it would.

Mathew: As a band.

Bill: It's definitely easier for us now that we know what to expect from everybody. There were times before



onekingdown



Rob was in the band... the old singer would drink and do drugs and there were always people in the band who you couldn't really rely on. You were never sure what they were going to do. Mathew: They wouldn't show up for shows.

Bill: They wouldn't show up for practice. Now, everyone is really reliable. I am not saying that if you drink you're a complete fuck up and you can't tell what time it is or you can't make it to shows, but all of us having that common bond and the love for it just makes it so much easier.

Mathew: Right on man, I love you.

Nicole (to Rob): Do you sing mostly about straight edge?

Rob: I do sing about it, but I don't make it a point to shove it down people's throats. I can sing about its virtue and about the positivity and the emotional implications. But, it's not my main lyrical influence.

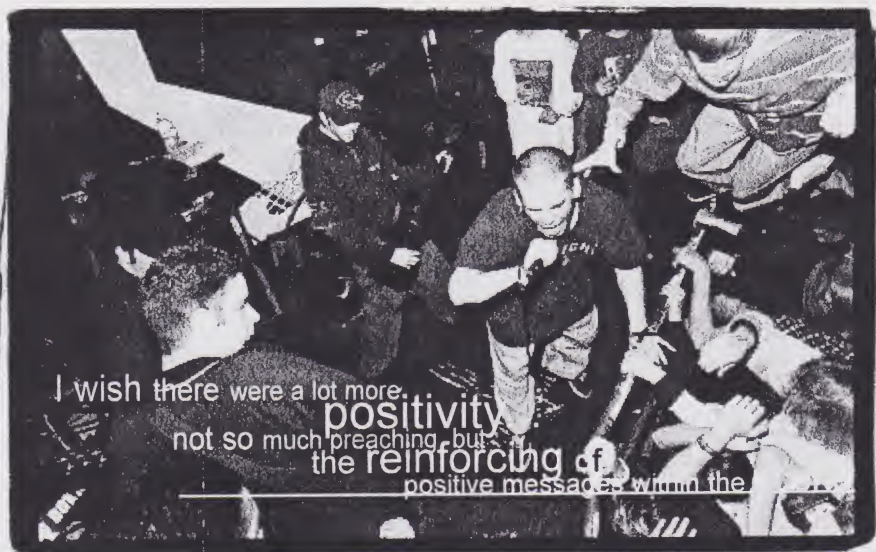
Nicole: Do you think being straight edge, or singing about it, having it as part of your band serves to alienate or unify?

Rob: It depends on the listeners point of view and the listeners outlook.

Nicole: But what about you? You being straight edge, does that bring you closer to people, or farther apart?

Derrick: It depends on where you are, I think. In Albany, it takes us further from people.

Nicole: You guys have issues with Albany...



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Mathew: Well, in Albany there is really no straight edge scene. There are some people who are straight edge, but at first, when we took on the whole straight edge persona, they were pretty quick to stop coming to the shows. We really had to...

Rob: Prove ourselves again.

Mathew: Yes, prove ourselves again. It's been a lot easier at other shows. Of course the music is going to alienate somebody because they're going to have the attitude that we're a straight edge band and they're not going to like us if we're straight edge. I have two brothers who smoke pot everyday. But, you know, they're my brothers and I love them. They still like my music and they still wear my shirts. They are a prime example of people who still get into the music.

Nicole: Do you all feel a big responsibility to the scene to keep it positive, keep your energy up and to be the support for kids who might not have any?

Rob: Yeah, because I practically grew up in the Albany hardcore scene. I wish there were a lot more positivity and more...not so much preaching, but the reinforcing of positive messages within the scene. That's just something that I wish there were more of, that I try to bring about. I try to be supportive of everyone. I won't shoot anyone down for any reason. It's my scene just as much as anyone else's and everyone else's scene just as much as mine. It's more of a family.

Nicole: In my life right now, I live in two different worlds, my hardcore world, and my work world. How do you make the transition from those two worlds, or how will you make the transition when hardcore dies out from your life?

Rob: First off, hardcore will never die out of my life, ever. It's who I am, it's what I am. I don't think there is any separation

between the hardcore me and an alternate me because that is just what I am. There are not two separate entities. It's one whole, it's what I am. Anyone else want to tackle that one?

Bill: For me, both lives are hardcore. If I am not playing shows, or going to shows, I work at Equal Vision so I am lucky enough to have that. You know, all day everyday. It's cool, but I have been going to shows since I was in seventh grade and it is something that I love. It's the perfect way of life for me, it's what I have always wanted to do.

Nicole: *Who is someone you admire?*

(After a silent moment, I offered someone I admire, Chris Carter, for his ability to entertain, but still make the audience question their beliefs, which finally prompted them to answer.)

Rob: I admire George Lucas.

Derrick: I am a George Lucas fan myself.

Rob: For his creativity with the Star Wars trilogy. I also admire Sun Su for his complete saturation with his own philosophies and with his equation of life and war.

Michael: I admire Peter Moses, the guitar player from Into Another because listening to his music and his playing has gotten me to explore music further and study further. He's gotten me to push myself so I can study as much as I possibly can at school, so one day I can be half as good as that man is.

Mathew: I would say, and not to sound like a dork or anything, but I admire Henry Rollins.

Nicole: *You kind of sound like a dork.*

Mathew: No seriously, he really opens up and shows his emotional side. That's probably why I like him so much. Because at a time, I wasn't the happiest person in the world and reading his books really got me through a lot of shit. Not to sound like some kind of shrink, but it was that really get-off-your-ass type of attitude, don't take shit so seriously and personally. Just get up...

Rob: And be as awesome as you can.... I admire my brother for his awesome sense of humor. He takes nothing seriously.

Bill: I think as a band we all admire Howard Stern.

Rob: We admire Wesley Willis.

Nicole: *So, who is Wesley Willis?*

Rob: He's a black schizophrenic homeless man who, well not anymore because he got a record deal...

Bill: He has a Casio keyboard and he just pushes the demo button and sings randomly over it, just gibberish. Every song is exactly the same. The same background music, the same four lines and a chorus.

Rob: It's fucking hilarious.

Bill: It's the funniest thing you'll ever hear.

Michael: He's an amazing artist.

Derrick: He really pushes me to explore music further.

Rob: He can really knock it out.

Nicole: *Where do you think you'll be in the year 2000, or five years from now?*

Bill: Hopefully playing a show somewhere.

Rob: We'll still be in Minneapolis, driving around, hanging out at the Mall of America...

Nicole: *I'll still be working here, it'll be great.*

Derrick: We could do another interview.

Nicole: *What do you think is the biggest waste of your time?*

Rob: Putting up with people. No, just the people that want so hard to shoot me down or shoot my brothers here down for any reason, whether it be straight edge or musically. Everyone has an opinion but you don't need to share yours, you can keep your opinion to yourself. If you don't have anything nice to say, keep your fucking mouth shut. I hate dealing with idiots.

Bill: Driving.

Mathew: It's necessary, but sleep.

Michael: Oh, I love sleep.

Mathew: I love sleep, too, but... you could do so much.

Rob: You sleep a third of your life away.

Michael: That's fine with me, I love sleeping. I am happiest when I am sleeping.

Mathew: I love sleep, too, but it is a waste of time. I like getting up early. Going to the mall is a waste of time.

Nicole: *And I do it every day.*

Michael: There's nothing that I am just like, "I hate doing that." There are some parts of school that I think are a waste of time, but I like them. When I look at it, when I am done...

Bill: When I am home, on the weekends, I'll just sit in front of the TV and stare blankly for fifteen hours straight and recall one show that was on during the day. I know there are so many things that I need to get done, that I

should be getting something done yet I just sit there and watch whole reruns of the A-Team.

Nicole: *That's not a waste of time...*

Rob: TV is the devil's tool.

Nicole: *This is my last formal question. What's one thing that takes precedence over everything, and don't say being straight edge or vegan...*

Derrick: The band does for me. If I'm working and we have a show, I have to leave work. Right now this is the biggest thing in my life.

Michael: My commitment to these guys is my biggest thing, over work, school, anything. If there is something that we can do, I'll do it, regardless of what else is going on.

Rob: Absosmurfly! This is important.

Derrick: We're pretty much into this band all the same. We drop whatever we're doing to do something with the band, for each other.

Bill: Everyone quit their jobs, quit school, just totally dissed their car payments, insurance payments...

Rob: School loans...

Bill: Just to do this tour. We're not going to make any money and we're going to come back so far in the hole that'll we'll be fucked, but...

Michael: We're going to want to turn out and go again and do it a week later.

Rob: Fuck yeah.

Nicole: *So you all get along really well? Do you ever have problems with each other?*

Mathew: I'm testy, I'm very testy.

Bill: Rob's hyper.

Rob: Yeah, I'm hyper. I'm sure it gets difficult to deal with me because I get so off the wall.

Nicole: *I noticed that....*

Rob: You caught me on the down side. But yes, we all get along well.

Nicole: *I guess that leaves the anything-else-you-want-to-say question.*

Mathew: Oh! I hate that!

Rob: Buy our record, please.

Mathew: Or EVR...

Bill: Yeah, they're an awesome label, they're not out to rip kids off.

Rob: And look into other types of music besides hardcore.

Mathew: There are more types of music than just hardcore.

Rob: Treat people how you want to be treated.

All: Thanks for the interview.



ONE KING DOWN 109th Street, Troy, New York 12182



Christianity and Punk: Understanding Identity and Fighting the Good fight

Recently I read a few chapters from the book A Primer for Daily Life by Susan Willis. In the book, she furthers the discussion begun by Karl Marx regarding commodities and their inherent value. While Marx saw two types of value (use and exchange), Willis goes on to mention a third. This is her notion of appearance value. Appearance value is the packaging of the commodity. This packaging works, through various means, to increase the overall value of the commodity. It entices by creating that slight barrier between commodity and user, allowing enough of a glimpse to initiate grandiose fantasies of anticipated performance. In addition, this barrier means that true ownership does not come until the shrink-wrap

has been removed. The commodity almost never lives up to the expectation.

Our consumer culture has let the commodity into every aspect of our lives. The ability to buy happiness at the local mall is a reality for the majority. Commodities have thus come to take the place of social expression. Parents opt to buy their kids toys and candy to make them stop complaining instead of verbally working out what the problem happens to be. The same can be seen in any Hallmark store. The majority of the store is filled with cards appropriate for practically every occasion—from birthdays to holidays, "I'm sorries," to, "I love you's." Thus, all one must do is buy the appropriate card, sign

it, and there is ready-made communication.

I believe this theory carries over to recent developments in modern pop culture. In the early 90's, a phenomena began where abnormal became the norm. The practice of conforming to nonconformity came with the media's glorification of alternative and punk bands that carried with them a certain non-conformist image. For today, this creates a humorous paradox, because in the mind of a majority of the youth who buy into this so-called nonconformist culture (and I do mean buy), they are not just buying nose jewelry, hair dye, and baggy pants; they are buying the commodity of uniqueness. Of course, to the outsider, this commodity is nothing more than a false reality, but to the user it is a means of communication through commodity. Thus, punk has become not only a commodity, but a false means of communication that can be attainable solely through dress.

To argue that punk still has vitality (and I use punk here as a general term to include punk, hardcore and any other alternative lifestyle that goes against the mainstream), there must be a definite separation of the dress code and the mentality. Not to say that there is no place for style, but as I have already stated, style is not definitive. It is instead the punk mindset or "ethic", if you will, that separates the true punk from the commodified punk. This ethic creates a social separation to be used for the means of critique and action. Much of what comes under fire in this critique are the traditional means, or status quo, that dictates American life. This includes such social constructs as government, law-enforcement and religion.

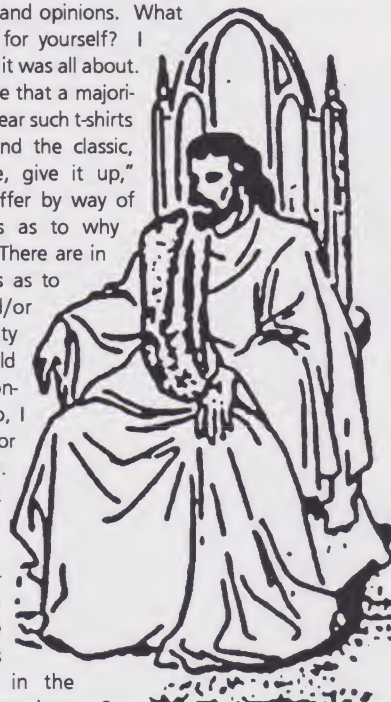
This is the only place where punk stands a chance at decommodifying itself by maintaining the notion that the system is inherently flawed; it is the responsibility of those with knowledge and means to do what they can to fight the system and tend to its victims. However, this action must be fueled by the right motivations. Meaning, for example, defacing property for the sole sake of defacing property is counterproductive. Defacing property for the purpose of sending a message to a specific group or to the public is usually justifiable and worthwhile.

One of the foremost "victims" of this unconscious effort to decommodify punk has been religion. By being anti-religion, not only are you anti-establishment, you're anti-authoritarian, and anti-God, and basically anti-the people who are followers of religion. Therefore, by declaring one statement, you've proven that you're, "not one of them," and you aren't so easily sucked into the propaganda shoveled by the authoritarian figures in your life. Obviously, you're different from the majority... and buying into the same sort of "follow-the-leader" mentality you're so opposed to. This really isn't a means of fair fighting.

I would first like to offer an apology of sorts to Christianity for two reasons. One, I feel that if those people that so adamantly despise it had done their homework and made an attempt to understand it on more than one level, they would not be so quick to denounce it. Second, because I am a Christian.

Upon seeing the newest product of Trustkill Records wearable paraphernalia (a t-shirt that says on the back: You are not the Chosen. You are not the Right. You are not the Children. Your religion is a lie), I had to laugh. What I saw was simply another t-shirt that tries to use shock value as a means of enhancing its market worth. It preys on the desire to spit in the eye of authority, yet to do it merely in the abstract by means of preprinted statements and opinions. What happened to thinking for yourself? I thought that was what it was all about.

I truly believe that a majority of the people who wear such t-shirts as the Trustkill one and the classic, "Christianity is a joke, give it up," would have little to offer by way of compelling arguments as to why Christianity is so evil. There are in fact legitimate reasons as to why one could and/or should dislike Christianity and I think they should be voiced within the context of this article. So, I have provided a list for general reference. Please note that this list is far from all-inclusive.



1. The genocide, both physical and cultural, of Native Americans. Christians played a large role in the oppression of Native Americans. So-called missionaries, feeling compelled to bring Jesus to the pagan and civility to the savage helped in the effort to remove "the red man" from desirable land and irradiate their culture.
2. Justification of racism. The early Protestants manipulated interpretation of the Bible so that it seemed to justify racism. Specifically, that the mark that God put on Cain, one of the children of Adam and Eve, for killing his brother, Able, was a mark of blackness.
3. Anti-Semitism. The Jews have been labeled by many as the killers of Jesus. This notion has helped prompt early justification of such atrocities as the Holocaust.
4. Homophobia. There is explicit Biblical material which condemns the sexual relations between same-sexed persons when taken out of historical context.
5. The murder of doctors that perform abortions. The debate over abortion has become a rallying point for conservatives everywhere. Somewhere along the way, the killing of doctors in the name of saving innocent life became justifiable.

I could go on, but I think that this is more than

enough in and of itself to peg the Christian religion as one of ignorance, fear, and oppression. And in many respects it is, however, the sentiments of intolerance expressed in the above list are not universal norms. For those who take such an uninformed and utterly indoctrinated approach to religion, I would dare say that it reflects a strong need for what sociologist Peter Berger refers to as a "sacred canopy". By this he means something that serves to rationalize existence and give it explicit meaning. He states: "Religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established... By sacred is meant a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than man and yet related to him which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience." It makes people feel that they are part of a bigger picture, adding importance and structure to their lives.

With that in mind, I would like to offer some personal testimony to what being a Christian can be about. The only real expertise in religious truth that I have is in personal truth that I have discovered. In an argumentative context it is, of course, flawed evidence because there is nothing empirical to back up my so-called truth. Yet in a faith-based religion, it is about as close as one can get. One of the reasons I feel comfortable in my religious identity is that I was allowed to claim it, instead of having it forced on me. Of course my parents made me go to church, but I viewed this requirement in the same way as I looked at going to the dentist—it was all part of being a kid in an authoritarian household where authority was delegated by age.

What allowed me to claim my religious identity was that I was encouraged to question and let others question my beliefs in order to understand exactly what I believed and why. For me, this is key because it makes me understand both the

What allowed me to claim my religious identity was that I was encouraged to question and let others question my beliefs in order to understand exactly what I believed and why.

positive and negative aspects of calling myself a Christian. In addition, this questioning process allows me to, when questioned about my stance on a certain issue, offer a more informed response than just, "because. . ." This is also why I feel I can stand blatantly opposed to groups such as the Christian Coalition and still call myself a Christian. It is due to an understanding of how they are manipulating the religion and its followers to serve their own political agenda.

Understanding my own religious identity is important on a personal level, but it is invaluable as a tool in relating to others and understanding their religious predisposition. I recently conducted an interview with a Catholic Priest who is the head of Indian Ministry in Minneapolis. His main job is to relate and provide aid to the local American Indian population. Interestingly,

Christianity has little to do with the operation outside of its origin and funding. Christianity is available for anyone interested, but it is never discussed or pushed on the American Indians. Coming from this perspective, the Priest said without reservation that if he had been born into an American Indian family instead of Catholic, he most likely would not be a Christian today.

Therefore, a religious identity becomes the result of how you were raised in a certain culture and the way in which the religion was introduced by the parental figures. I consider myself lucky to have been presented with a religious identity that makes a great degree of sense to me and helps to make me a better person.

Being a Christian has taught me respect, compassion, and the power of forgiveness. It has also made me hate hypocrisy, oppression, and the flawed nature of humanity. Finally, it has made me maintain a drug-free lifestyle, an abstinent lifestyle, and most importantly, given me a sense of meaning and purpose in my life. In addition, it instills in me a social responsibility to contribute and critique the world in which I live, while also comforting those who are so often victimized by our consumer culture.

While everyone may not agree with the importance of some or all of these values, I feel justified in saying that, if nothing else, they cannot be looked upon as harmful values. While I am far from perfect, and I often times find it hard to do things such as show respect and compassion for everybody, I am upholding an ideal that in theory is harmless, and in practice is beneficial.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my purpose. I wrote this to present a side of religion that works in many of the same ways that punk or straight edge does. It unites, provides a community and instills an ethical code that puts the world into perspective. It provides you with meaning and purpose. It allows you to stand outside of mainstream society and know that what you are doing is important.

For all of those who are so opposed to Christianity, I would be very interested in the factors that make it such a bane on your existence. I acknowledge that there are many intolerant and oppressive manifestations of Christianity, but it is possible to critique these manifestations and their actions without devaluing the religion as a whole. With so much evil in the world, why do we choose to pool our efforts towards knocking that which may be the one thing that gives some people a reason to keep going?

Christianity is an easy target because of its pervasive nature within the United States. Thus, it is a popular rallying flag employed by many who consider themselves anti-establishment, nonconformist, and/or punk. To stand under this anti-Christian banner is to have your beliefs spoon-fed to you and to conform to the uninformed, stereotyped, commodified rebellion. I challenge you to chisel out your own identity, instead of buying into the commodified counter-culture that simply tells you what it is.



interview:

Nicole: Let's begin with how Union got started.

Scott: Originally the band started 2 1/2 years ago as a three piece. Keith sang and played bass. Mike played drums and Vic, (recently replaced) played guitar. Then, a friend of ours named Ben came in and played bass so Keith could take on vocal duties. I came in about a 1 1/2 years ago around November of last year and completed us as a five piece. Things have been going well ever since.

Nicole: It seems like it has taken you awhile to put out a CD and really play outside of Buffalo, where you live.

Scott: They were just starting to come into their own, just before I joined the band. I had seen them play shows and I knew them through being close friends with Mike. I met him when I first came to Buffalo and he's a great guy. That was the reason I took interest in his band. Before I joined Union, I saw them play a show and saw how they were evolving, coming into their own. They were starting to get their own style, something that I really liked and I asked them, being friends of mine, how they felt about me playing with them, you know, give me a shot at it.

Nicole: What was it about their style, and now yours, that you liked?

Scott: Before I joined, Vic was, and is a really good guitar player, and everything came together as a

Union

whole group. I felt that they were really good at what they were doing. Then I came in and as people, they are people who are really down to earth and that I like being in a band with. You're band could be amazing, but if it's full of jerks, it's not going to last. You see so many bands break up because they hate each other. I'm not saying that everyone hated each other, but a prime example is Texas is the Reason. There was tension there. They're an amazing band, they're one of my favorite bands, but now they are broken up and it's a shame. Tension can take its toll on a band. I enjoy the people I'm in a band with and the music they play. I felt it was hardcore with a metal edge, similar to Worlds Collide or 108, two bands that I like a lot. So, I enjoyed playing and I thought that they were doing it a little better than most people and had creativeness, which I think some bands lack. They had more originality with the way they composed music. Everything pieced together great, and I am just glad I could be a part of it.

Nicole: Do you want to talk about how Snapcase has helped you out?

Scott: Sure, they definitely helped us out in the past. They helped us play on a bill this winter about a year and 1/2 ago at this show in New York City at Coney Island High with themselves, Mouthpiece and Deadguy. Without Daryl, we wouldn't have been on

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that show. I talk to Daryl about many things (they're roommates). I'm pretty open with him. I live with three other guys and I'm the youngest one. The oldest guy who lives here actually owns the house. He's 32 now.

Nicole: I heard your house is pretty fresh and has real furniture.

Scott: I am pretty fortunate to live at this house. (Scott goes onto describe his room and all the many music posters up on his walls). Not to sound cheesy, but hardcore is a big part of my life, collecting, all that stuff. There's nothing I like more than to get a good record... more CD's nowadays. I used to collect 7 inches, but it's a lot easier for me to do CD's. Especially after my record player broke and I didn't get another one for two years. So I've gone to everything on CD and my collection is like 900 CD's.

Nicole: I think everyone in hardcore is attached to it, it's what they're into. Speaking of CD's, what did you think of your CD?

Scott: I am pretty happy with it. This is the first band I have ever been in and I came into the band right at the writing process. Originally we went and recorded five songs at the Salad Days studio in Boston. Four of them were new ones and one was an old song off a 7 inch we released beforehand on a Buffalo record label. We decided to re-record that song, just because we could. One of the new songs was actually written two practices before I joined the band. They started to write it one practice and finished it then next. Then I was there and they decided to teach me that one first, then all the other ones I was a part of. It just feels really good to be a part of something like that.

Nicole: Was it what you wanted?

Scott: It's what I wanted for a long time. I was one of those kids like most people in the scene, and not enough people have the guts to admit it, maybe like admitting you masturbate, stuff like that. But, I was one of those kids that would put on their records, jump around his room...

Nicole: Dive off the futon?

Scott: Yeah, it didn't matter if Monday through Tuesday maybe I was the singer, Wednesday through Saturday maybe I was playing guitar, but it was the best. It was good to finally be a part of something like that.

Like I said before, hardcore means a lot to me. I like lots of other types of music, but this is what I would be happy playing because people care more about hardcore music whether your in a band or just a kid going to shows. People who are into hardcore are more sincere than people who go to rock and roll concerts.

Nicole: Well, I don't know about that. I think hardcore kids are more a part of the community, rather than being a kid who just happens to like the Smashing Pumpkins and loves going to their shows. When you go to a hardcore show, you see twenty of your friends there. And if you go to a hardcore show in another



city, maybe you don't see people you know, but you're still a part of the community.

Scott: That's true, and I've talked to many of my friends about this, but people who are involved in hardcore care about it more.

Nicole: *Most of the people have some sort of investment in it, either they do a zine or are in a band, book shows... They have some sort of interest in it besides just the music.*

Scott: I think a lot of people who go to a Smashing Pumpkins concert, for example, their just there because they like the music or it's the cool thing to do... all their friends think that Billy Corgan is God. That's the best thing for them to do because they couldn't possibly do anything cooler than go to a Smashing Pumpkins concert. I think when people go to a hardcore concert it means a lot more and hopefully they come away with a positive message and get something out of it. I've gotten a lot out of hardcore for as long as I've been involved.

Nicole: *What do you think you've gotten out of it?*

Scott: I'd say that fifty percent of my morals have come out of hardcore and hardcore records. I really didn't grow up until I graduated from high school. I come from a pretty religious family and I go to church every Sunday. But, it wasn't like my religion was that you go to church every Sunday and that was it. A lot of people got to church on Sunday because their parents make them. I go to church on Sunday and a lot of times, Friday night. I honestly live my religion. I was born and raised a Christian and take a lot of those beliefs my own way. I don't agree 100 percent with everything, but it taught me positive morals and values which is what I get out of hardcore records. I read along with the Turning Point album or an Insted record. It's just a positive message.

Nicole: *Someone once told me that if it were not for punk music (because I'm straight edge) I would never be straight edge. Do you think that's true for you... that you would have never discovered those morals without it, or were they just catalysts and you would have eventually become what you are?*

Scott: I think it gave me more encouragement to be the way I am. I was born and raised to think that drinking is wrong, most people are. But, the next thing you know, they're in junior high and Billy Bob's having a party... they're going to break into their parent's peppermint schnapps, "you want some?" That was never really a part I felt I belonged into, you know? I am not going to lie and say I didn't try it, but I had a sip of beer when I was in seventh grade and it grossed me out. That's the only time I've ever had a sip of beer, or maybe a year later in eighth grade.

Nicole: *All the kids in your band drink, right? How does that make you feel?*

Scott: Honestly, it doesn't make a difference to me at all. I like them for who they are and they're great people. I'm sure everyone knows someone who is straight edge but might have a character flaw which is far greater than that. I don't say that they are making a mistake because they drink, but a lot of people still make mistakes and learn from them. I'm not saying that everyone who drinks is going to mess themselves up and have a close call and say I am never going to drink again. I've been to so many parties in my life where you see that person who always gets too drunk and you see them the next day and they say, "I'm never drinking again." Then you see them a couple of weeks later and they're bombed out of their mind.

Nicole: *So what do the rest of the people in your band do? Do*

they work or are they mostly in school?

Scott: Everyone is in school except for me. Actually, Mike graduated. Mike is kind of like the eldest since he has gone through college. He works for some factory, I am not sure exactly what he does. But, he gets to work everyday from 7 to 3 o'clock and that takes its toll on him. Myself, I've gone to school twice. As a puzzle I may have between a semester, and a half of a semester of classes under my belt. After I graduated from high school, my initial plans were to take a year off. Just before the semester started, though, I decided it would be best to go right to school. I had a bad schedule, and I moved. Plus I had a 45 minute drive to school... with a class at eight o'clock, another at two... that lasted about one semester for me. As long as I can get my classes, my plans are to go back to school this year. Everyone else though is still in school, everyone goes to the University of Buffalo. So that is one thing that keeps everyone together.

Nicole: *What do they study?*

Scott: Ben is in accounting. I'm not sure exactly what Keith takes. Keith has this problem that he doesn't focus himself as he should. I can honestly say that is one of my problems as well when I do go to school. But I just go to a small community college so I don't have the problem of as many people being around.

Nicole: *What are you studying?*

Scott: Graphic arts.

Nicole: *That's what I wanted to do, but I studied photography so now I'm sort of screwed with getting a job.*

Scott: It's hard to get a job wherever you're at. A lot of people want experience, but a lot of people don't want to give you that experience. It puts you between a rock and a hard place. You have to pay your dues... even in hardcore. I do band booking in Buffalo and I get a lot of calls from people who say, "I'm in a band and we just recorded a demo but we want to go on a nation wide tour." It's not like you're booking a show every single day of the week. They'll call and say, "We're looking to play Wed. the 12," and it'll be exam week. I feel bad because I can't help them out, but it's hard, just like getting a job. The same as a show, if you don't have experience or don't have the record out.

Nicole: *So, let's say you finish school, what are you going to do?*

Scott: Ah... I'll be sacred out of my shoes and shit my pants?

Nicole: *You're out of school now and doing ok. Or, do you think that once you are out of school and have a degree that you should be "making something out of yourself," rather than doing whatever comes along?*

Scott: That's the thing... once I have my degree, all I can do is to try and get my foot in the door somewhere, get a job somewhere. Right now, if I think about it, I get scared. I think, "Wow, I'm twenty-two years old. What am I doing with my life?" I'm afraid I'm going to have a mid-life crisis at any moment and I'm only twenty-two. But I think at twenty-two, you know? Like yesterday, I was working and I heard on the radio, "Happy twenty-second birthday to Jule whatever." I'm thinking... she just turned twenty-two and I just turned twenty-two six months ago, what am I doing with my life?

I'd say
fifty percent
of my
are from
hardcore

Nicole: Hey, I'm turning twenty-three soon, I'm out of college... talk about crisis.

Scott: I'm totally happy with my life, I can't complain. I'm not saying I'm twenty-two and I'm so old and I hate myself, I've got no life...

Nicole: I think you feel like you should be going somewhere, that's what it is for me. I feel like I should be somewhere, and it isn't that I am not somewhere, it's that I'm not anywhere all that special.

Scott: I'm just afraid that I'm not going to be anywhere in five years. Right now, I have the Descendants mentality... I don't want to grow up. I'm thinking I'll make a walking 7 Seconds song, I'll stay young till I die. I am completely content with hanging out with my friends who have the same mentality. I can honestly say that in this stage of my life, I haven't been this happy in years. My family is slowly starting to come together which is odd because my family is in four pieces. My family isn't the all-American family it used to be.

Nicole: Who's family is?

Scott: After two divorces it isn't the all-American family, but it is slowly coming together. I have bothers, sisters, myself, a nice home. I'm doing well for myself financially, I guess. I have great friends and great company. I can't complain. Like you said, what are you going to do in a couple of years?

Nicole: Ok, this is my last question... Now that Union is starting to get more recognition, you've

that one of the reasons I can talk to her so freely is that I talk to people where I work... customers that come in. I talk to them and I don't even know who they are. I think that I am a pretty decent conversationalist. If you have something in common with someone then you can talk to them more openly... that's why I feel I can talk to her. But I feel I can talk to anyone after I come in, go to work, go to a job and people are going to come in to buy clothes, because I work at a clothing store. I'm not going to go out of my way and put on a fake mask when I got o work. I enjoy people's company and I like to talk.

Nicole: What about people who are going to look at what you say and pick it apart and take everything you say really seriously... This is who Scott Sprigg is and there is no gray area...

Scott: I've found that in interviews that I have read. There are some where people come off as jerks because they are well stated and pretty open, like something they will almost verbatim say... this sucks, these people suck... Interviews are a good way to determine how someone thinks. You can't tell how someone really feels on a piece of paper, but you can get a good feel for someone by something they do say. I'd say you'd have to meet me and if you were crazy enough, you could probably hang out with me, but not for too long, the authorities might come after me. I like to get crazy sometimes, such as my friends know. But, it's up to that person to interpret my words and try to feel the way I feel. I think people who read this will have a common bond with me... an interest in hardcore music. It's been one of the most important things in my life the last eight years and there are people who can relate to that. Hardcore is a feeling. That's why your band can sound like Snapcase, Cast Iron Hike, or Unbroken. They can all sound differently, but it is that common bond. It sounds cheesy to say, but it is the emotion that goes into it, that's what makes a hardcore band a hardcore band.

ent
7 morals
dcore
and

got another
EP coming
out on
Ferret... How
do you feel
about being
interviewed
now?

Scott: I don't
mind it. I like to
talk to people. I
work a retail job
as well.

Nicole: You're just
a busy person.

Scott: I have two jobs
as we speak. So my
other job is retail and I
was telling my girlfriend



Some of these zines are a little old, while some are current issues. If you are interested in ordering one, I am sure that they will either have back stock or have a current issue just for you. Just make sure to be specific about what you want, or perhaps what you don't want. If you don't know how much a zine is, remember to at least send a dollar. It's the nice thing to do. Got it?

Darkness at Noon #10 (32 cents)

I suppose it isn't fair to review this specific issue because it isn't a full issue... it's just one 8.5 by 11 page, front a back, but what the hell. This issue is all about the Arkansas punk scene (I suppose you are supposed to draw relevance to your own scene) and how it is, "plagued with apathy." He talks about how the scene is divided, calls for scene unity and contemplates how much the community is really a community. His next issue was supposed to focus in more detail on these issues. I can't get into this, but maybe you can. PO Box 465, Mountain Pine, AR 71956-0465

Hanging Like A Hex (\$1)

You have to be somewhat intrigued by a zine with such an odd name. The bulk of this zine is interviews: Coalesce, Earth Crisis, Rocket from the Crypt, and Jason Farrell of The Bluetip. I can only be in awe of someone who has the guts to go after an interview from a band on a big label. So, the interviews are well done as are the reviews. Another aspect of this zine that I appreciate is the editors effort to include an interesting layout. Yeehaw! 201 Maple Ln, Syracuse, NY 13212

Legion of Doom #5 (?)

L of D consists of two band interviews, (New Day Rising and my favorite band: Unbroken, which consequently tells you how old it is), zine and record reviews, and various personal writings. Brian is a great writer. I found myself easily relating to his personal writings and interested in the person behind them. He also does stellar reviews that delve beyond the superficial and are actually critical of the material presented him. This might have been the last issue of L of D, but I imagine Brian has gone on to another project and if he has, I am positive it will be a great accomplishment. I suppose I also like Brian's zine because he takes the effort to have his images scanned in. You have to love dedication like that. 8707 Carriage Ln, Tinley Park, 60477

Mind Wreck #3 (?)

This zine is emo to the core. It includes a ton of personal writings, not just about the editors life, but about issues such as respect, how the military is trying to draft him, and a bit on Columbus Day. He also has an interview with the band Blandine Cosima. The layout is cut and paste, but clear and organized. #4 is probably out by now so hop to it. 3700 S 33rd, Lincoln, NE 68506

No Labels (\$3 ppd.)

In the fashion of many hardcore/punk zines, the bulk of the text is in the form of interviews. As you can see by the price, it's large and doing well. Anyhow, this issue includes interviews with Bloodlet, Metroschifter, Neurosis, and Iceburn. There are a couple of columns by some hardcore celebrities, and a few personal notes by the editor. The zine and music reviews are excellent. I am positive you'll like this one. 1148 5th Ave #7D, New York, NY 10128

Nothing #? (?)

This is a purely personal zine with a couple of band photos thrown in. His writing style is fairly vague, as in there are a lot of she's and you's rather than Aunt Sue or whoever. Every now and then he mentions someone specific, but his style of writing is very stream of consciousness. Themes run from crushes to feelings of



emptiness and betrayal with some revelations at the end. There's a ton of misery here, and an equal amount of material to read. 20 Gerald Rd. #2, Brighton, MA 02135

Presently out of Product #3 (?)

This is a terrific zine done by two women. They have interviews with Instant Girl and Dan Savage, articles on massacres, marijuana, free trade, cold wars, histories of women revolutionaries, a history of woman-hating, and so much more. I love this zine! My favorite part is where they review drinks from the international grocery. I always wonder what those things taste like. Anyhow, this is a zine with a feminist, butt-kicking attitude. It's well written and comes from obviously intelligent, well-read, wonderful women. Just trust me and make them send you a copy. 3917 Castleman, St. Louis, MO 63110

Slut #5 (?)

This zine is one of those personal/everything zines. #5 features interviews with Arrakis, String Tricks, Perry Gentile of Perry's Rockpile, and her Mom, artwork, reviews... everything. Besides a sloppy layout, Slut features personal writings by the editor and some of her friends. Most of them are about pre-college/high school/I'm-going-to-miss-my-friends kind of topics. The interviews are marginal at best. Fortunately for you, the editor abandoned the ask-every-band-the-same-question mode of interviewing she used in the last ones. My final comment would be: why name it Slut? 155 W 60th St #511, New York, NY 10023 (c/o L. Navaja)

Tail Spins #27 (\$3 ppd.)

Yikes! This zine is so big. Its circulation is something like 10,000, which is surprising because it is a lot of fluff. They sent me their zine so I would run their ad in BS and in return they'd run a zine classified for me in theirs. They had this PS that if I wasn't interested I should send them a copy of my latest issue in trade for the zine they sent me. I don't know what's up with that, but I'm not biting. Anyhow, this has interviews with Boys Life, Buck Ormsby, and Gas Huffer. Other articles include games to play with your cat, Bigfoot stuff, and an article on Jim Jones. Trust me, it sounds better than it

really is. PO Box 1860, Evanston, IL 60204

Third Party #14 (32 cent stamp)

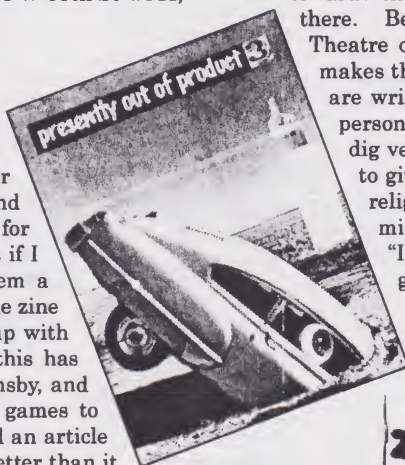
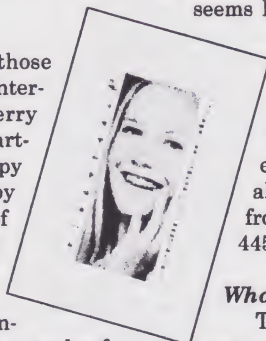
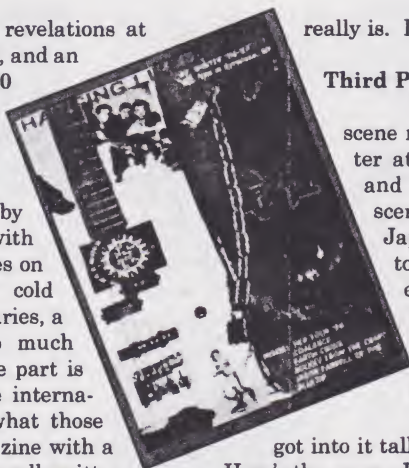
I have six words: scene reports, scene reports, scene reports. This newsletter attempts to unify the hardcore scene and broaden communication between scenes. There are reports from Poland, Japan, Pennsylvania, and Boston, not to mention band photos and a couple of editorial pieces. If you want to get hooked into global hardcore... 21 Nancy Ln, Amherst, NY 14228

We Ain't Got No Car! #4

The editor of this zine and I really got into it talking about what I thought of his zine. Here's the scoop. I think this zine has a lot of potential. The kinds of things that he chooses to put in his zine surpass the usually bland crap most people decide to publish. But, I have this problem with articles that seems like they are going to be fact-based, but are really just personal opinion. This zine has a couple of those very articles. Anyhow you'll get a lot of personal writings from the editor about moving, job; a profile of Propagandhi; some thoughts about straight edge, evolution, America and a ton more. This also comes with a compilation tape of bands from Alabama and a separate review booklet. 445 14th St, San Francisco, CA 94103

Whacked (?)

This is another cut and paste zine where there are articles everywhere, stuff turned upside down and basically an annoying layout. It's geared towards the Christian hardcore/punk kids out there. Besides an interview with the band Theatre of the Macabre (which consequently makes them sound like their on drugs), there are writings about shows he attends, more personal writings and reviews. He doesn't dig very deep for his writings, but I have to give him credit for standing up for his religion. For the atheists out there, you might be amused by phrases such as, "I'm all for being drug-free but it won't get you into heaven," and, "We may have to go through a lot of crap, but God will deliver justice." 134 11th Ave S #211, Hopkins, MN 55434



zine reviews



by Eric Olson



American Steel "Hope Wanted" 7" - Ok it's not that this is bad music, but I can't get into this one. The first side sticks to a straight ahead punk style not unlike the non-ska tracks that Operation Ivy did. The second side follows a little different tune and throws in some ska. The part that really bugs me is that I swear the guitar is out of tune on the second side of this record. Putting that aside, the music would sit really well with fans of street punk and even grab some ska listeners. (*New Disorder Records 14th St., San Francisco, CA 94103*)



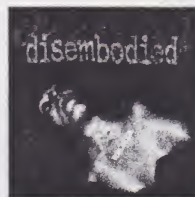
Anti Matter comp, CD - If you didn't guess it already this is a comp done by none other than Norm Arenas from the Anti Matter zine. His zine may be long gone but this 16 track CD is left over for us to enjoy. From start to finish this CD delivers the goods. Besides the excellent sound quality throughout, the range of bands couldn't be more representative of the hardcore scene from the last few years. Bands include Quicksand, 108, Outspoken, Farside, Lifetime, and

Mouthpiece, just to name a few. The stand-out tracks are too many to list but some of my personal favorites include Threadbare, 108 and Mouthpiece. Without a doubt, one of the most solid and comprehensive hardcore comps, ever. Highly recommended. (*available at any Best Buy*)

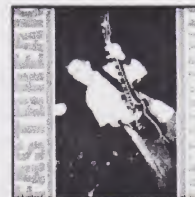


Bringing It Back 7" comp - A few weeks ago in New Jersey I saw this one and picked it up. The first side has Outspoken and Ignite, and the second side has Blackspot and Remain. The Outspoken track is the same one on the Anti Matter comp and it straight up rocks. It's a long ass song but is probably one of their best. The Ignite track follows suite and rocks. It is a different version of a song that is on their new EP out on Revelation. The second side, however, is a different story. It falls flat, both Blackspot and Remain remind me of one thing: generic hardcore. The Blackspot track is old school while the Remain song is a bad attempt at singing. Overall I have mixed feelings on this one. How about this, if you see it used, get it. (*Ammunition Records PO Box 461 Bellflower, CA 90707*)

Disembodied "Diablerie" CD - I'm not to sure what I can say about this one. From start to finish this 9 song



full length is what you would expect. Insane heaviness. The songs are medium length attacks on the listener that finally capture what these guys (and girl) sound like live. Honestly Disembodied is the heaviest band I have ever heard. You can't live without it. (*Ferret Records, 72 Windsor Dr., Eatontown, NJ 07724*)



Fastbreak "Don't stop Trying" 7" - I really wanted to like this one. It comes complete with old school youth crew packaging, big X's and all the works; everything that one would need for some karate kicks off the futon, right? Wrong. This CD lags. There are six songs of old school slop that do nothing more than waste my time. (*Third Party Records, 21 nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228*)



Floorpunch "Division One Champs" 7" - Now I can get into this one. I've heard a lot of hype

about this band so I gave into the pressure and picked up a copy. Straight up old school is the theme here. All six songs rock hard and never stop (not even at the break of dawn). This release, like precious few other hardcore records, has that "feel" to it. Kind of like the Chain Of Strength 7". It has that desperate feel of immediacy and passion that is usually only found during a live performance. It's just one of those things that words cannot explain. I love this record. (*In My Blood Records, c/o Brett Beach, 52 Spring St., Red Bank, NJ 07701*)



Half Empty "Welcome Home" 7" - Damn. This wins the original award for this issue. I cannot explain this well enough for you to understand it. There appears to be a male and female vocalist singing at the same time, not in key, but singing none the less. The music reminds me a lot of the early Frank Zappa stuff due to its wackiness. Although, on the other hand, it sounds like a punk band. I don't know, I do recommend this for those of you who have a taste for a "different" sort of music. (*New Disorder Records, 445 14th St., San Francisco, CA 94103*)

Hatebreed "Under the Knife" 7" - This 7" is the demo that these kids have been selling at their shows for the last year or so. As the name would



imply, these guys aren't happy. Inside this mother there are four songs of total anger and despair. Song topics range from animal rights to personal topics and the song titles are equally as tough as there name. (ex- "Kill an Addict" and "Smash Your Enemies" just to name a few.) Anyone that has attended one of the Breed's east coast shows can attest to the mayhem this band is able to incite. Bring the nightmare home and scare mom into cooking something vegan. (Smorgasbord Records, 50 Woodstock Rd., Carmel, NY 10512)



In Flight Program
Revelation comp, CD- With 73 minutes of music for 4 bucks you really can't go wrong. Basically this comp has a song from all the bands that Revelation has ever put out (except Warzone and a few other early ones). This of course is going to include some of the bands that changed our lives. It's all here, stuff from Gorilla Biscuits, Youth Of Today, Bold, Burn, Judge and all the new bands on Rev as well. Standouts include the Ignite track "Embrace" and the

Chain of Strength track "True Till Death". I'd be totally into this comp if it were not for some of the new pop punk bands that Revelation has signed. Some of the tracks on this thing don't deserve your time. However, with those tracks aside, this comp is a good way for someone new to hardcore to get a healthy taste of what's out there and what came before. Overall, this is a solid comp. Also, for your old school viewing enjoyment, the cover features Salba bustin' a mute in a pool. (Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)



Krakatoa "Clouds Burned by Sunshine" 7"- I tend to use extremes in my reviews so please excuse me on this one. There are not words on this earth to describe the passion of this release. Krakatoa is a project band with Dave from Harvest and Carl from Threadbare that has existed on and off a couple of times both before, during, and after Threadbare. The music has a slight metal feel to it, yet it is very progressive and technical. The sound quality is exceptional and the vocals are the real standout. The lyrics, in true Dave style, are personal, abstract, and screamed with more gusto than a locomotive. At times the vocals are sung but mainly they are a full out scream fest not unlike Harvest or

Threadbare. I highly recommend this release and in fact it is one of my favorite 7"s ever. (Second Nature, PO Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138)



Man Afraid "Those Disenchanted" 7" - I have to admit, I had some high hopes for this one, maybe too high. Following up a record like their last, "Uphill Struggle" is no small accomplishment. From start to finish "Uphill Struggle" was raw political punk emotion. Many feel that it was one on the better 7"s ever. So, with that in mind, I was expecting everything and a little more. The record starts out strong but spins out for me. The strong lyrical message is masked by a high guitar level and it makes it hard to follow along. The overall quality of the recording is distracting, but I realize they ran up against incredible obstacles putting this record out. Without comparison to their first 7", the record is excellent. The songs are packed with pure emotion and vital content. I shouldn't even be comparing it to their last one because it is simply unfair to both the listener and the musicians. It's just that this band ment so much to me as I came up in the hardcore scene. I broke all engagements to go see them. I will never forget Man Afraid on a hot summer night pouring themselves out

onstage. I think about those times often and only wish others could have witnessed Man Afraid is I had because they embodied everything that was DIY hardcore/punk. (Half-Mast Records, PO Box 14118, Minneapolis, MN 55414)



MIJ "300 Miles" 7"- MIJ is a damn fine band. They have an emo feel to them not unlike the Promise Ring or other bouncy emo acts. The songs on this record are very well written and show through on each track. The problem I have is the sound quality. It borders on OK to disastrous. There are some serious mixing problems here with the cymbals and the overall levels of everything. The levels are too high and they in turn make things sound distorted and hissy. It really is a shame because this band is too good to be stuck with a recording like this. You should really see them live to find out what they really sound like. (One Percent Records, PO Box 141048, Minneapolis, MN 55414)



One King Down
"Bloodlust Revenge" CD - Ok, I'd just like to

say that every time I have ridden in editor Nicole's car she has had this CD in there. She can finger point and recite every one of these songs like she is tuned in to some machine. However, all of this obsessiveness is not without good reason. This CD rocks. There are six songs of new school style straight edge hardcore topped off with a vocalist that has more than his share of talent. The lyrics cover topics like child abuse, animal rights and straight edge. Most of the vocals are screamed yet some of them are sung/spoken. For those who know me, the spoken thing is a huge turnoff. Not the case here. They are extremely melodic, in key, and very appropriate. The music is mid-tempo to fast and has a lot of good breakdowns and buildups. The instant I heard this thing I knew that this was excellent hardcore.



Sick Of It All "Built to Last" CD - One of the first hardcore shows I ever checked out was Sick Of It All. It was total energy throughout the whole show, complete with mics for the crowd to sing along with and stairs up to the stage for easy access stage dives. On their latest, SOIA have bottled some of this brew and brought it to CD. The music is

record reviews

classic SOIA style and even branches out into a more modern hardcore sound at times. The production is some of the best I have ever heard: both the guitar and bass are very rich and deep yet never muddy. Lou's lyrics focus on scene unity and acceptance, something we all could use a share of. With lyrics like, "old school, or the new, doesn't mean a thing if your hearts not true," how can you go wrong?



Snapcase "Progression Through Unlearning" CD- A few years ago Snapcase basically invented their own style of hardcore. Some people called it new school, others called it groovecore, and soon they blew up. They still are, Snapcase is huge. With a highly individual style such as theirs, I have always wondered were they could go without repeating themselves. To my total surprise they have reinvented themselves once again. This music is not like their older stuff. It is faster and rarely relies on chugga-chugga riffs. The song structures are very mature and the vocals never grow dull or repetitive. I can't really compare it to anything else out there. It has a little bit of an alternative feel to it but heavier. You should really just check it out, it will not disappoint. (*Victory Records, PO Box 146546, Chicago, IL 60614*)



Softies "Winter Pageant" CD - The Softies are not really a band but a group. It is two women, one sings and both of them play guitar. This is their 4th release (including their 7"). It is not unlike their previous stuff as it relies on beautiful vocal har-

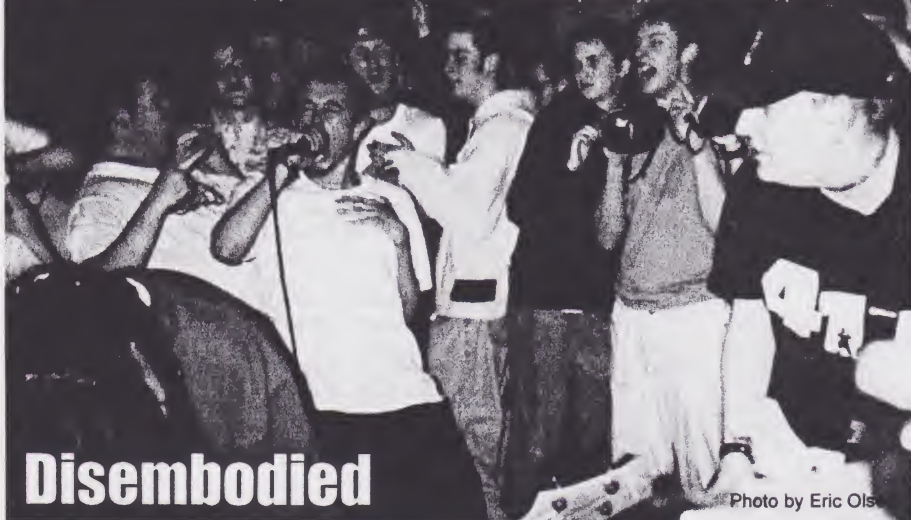
Minneapolis band and it does not disappoint. The recording quality isn't quite as crisp and power full as their last release but it still rules. The vocals are more raw on this one and it makes it seem as if you are right in the room with the singer. The song structures are what really grabbed me on this one. They are very original and they only prove what we already knew; Threadbare is all about originality. There are six songs and one bonus track to make a total of



songs are about but I don't care, it sounds good. The best part about this is that it is really straight up danceable hardcore yet they throw some real curves in there that make it really not so straight up after all. (*Ferret Records, 72 Windsor Dr.,*

music is on the metal end of things and the vocals are all screamed. The song structures are simple yet very original. ZAO are masters of tension. They have the ability to pull the listener in then snap them right back with their buildups and breakdowns. After a quick glance through the CD booklet one will realize all of these songs are about Christianity and devotion to Jesus Christ. I have no problem with this, yet 10 songs about Jesus, or anything for that matter,

The last show Disembodied played with Justin Kane on drums and possibly, their last show, period.



Disembodied

Photo by Eric Ols

monies and simple guitar parts. This is awesome, mellow time music. Very well done. (*K Records, PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507*)

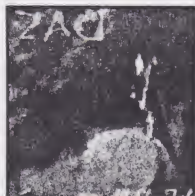


Threadbare "Escapist" CD- This is the last release from this

seven. The bonus track (on the CD, it's different on the vinyl) is a Misfits cover complete with low-fi guitar sound and raunchy guitar punch ins. I love this record. (*Doghouse Records, PO Box 8946, Toledo, OH 43623*)

Union "In the Shadows" CD- Another fine release from Carl and Ferret Records. This stuff is straight up gruff hardcore. The sound quality isn't great but it is made up for with energy. I can't really tell what the

Eatontown, NJ 07724)



ZAO "All Else Failed" CD - Every so often a band comes along that is strikingly original and unique. ZAO is one of those bands. From start to finish this full length CD never gives up. The

is a little much. This, however, is my one and only gripe. Words cannot describe the power this band packs. If I say anything more it will just kill it. Regardless of your spiritual beliefs you would be robbing yourself of a rewarding experience if you did not pursue this release. This is absolutely, truly devastating music you cannot live without. (*Steadfast Records, 1129 Middle Ave., Flyria, OH 44035*)

record reviews

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Info on this zine

issue should come out sometime in September, but you never know... If you would like a zine sent to you send \$1 in the USA and \$2 worldwide. Make sure you include your address in your letter and send to the PO box listed below. If you want anything other than the current issue, please make that clear in your order, even though issue number one and two are sold out on my end.

Contributions: I am looking for articles, interviews, photos, short stories and artwork. *Articles and interviews:* I usually like mainly "researched" articles but I can be open to other forms. Send them either on disk, through e-mail, or typed, if none of that is possible, I'll live if your article is truly fabulous. The three articles in this issue all, eerily I might add, have a word count of 2,100 and that is a pretty good size. For interviews, I am looking for a slightly different word count... around 3000 (as the One King Down interview is). If you have recently done a great interview of a band, and can get a hold of pictures of them, let me know. *Photos:* Band photos are great, your art photos, or even pictures of your cat, it can all work and they need to be originals (which I will send back when I am finished). *Artwork:* I am only looking for centerfolds now. Let me know and we can work something out. *Short Stories:* send them on in and I'll let you know.

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